

MOURNING AT THE SIGHT OF THE CRUCIFIED NO. 860

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 14, 1869,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*"And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."
Luke 23:48.*

MANY in that crowd came together to behold the crucifixion of Jesus, in a condition of the most furious malice. They had hounded the Savior as dogs pursue a stag, and at last, all mad with rage, they hemmed Him in for death. Others, willing enough to spend an idle hour, and to gaze upon a sensational spectacle, swelled the mob until a vast assembly congregated around the little hill upon which the three crosses were raised.

There unanimously, whether of malice or of wantonness, they all joined in mockery of the victim who hung upon the center cross. Some thrust out their tongue. Some wagged their heads. Others scoffed and jeered. Some taunted Him in words, and others in signs, but all alike exulted over the defenseless man who was given as a prey to their teeth. Earth never beheld a scene in which so much unrestrained derision and expressive contempt were poured upon one man so unanimously and for so long a time. It must have been hideous to the last degree to have seen so many grinning faces and mocking eyes, and to have heard so many cruel words and scornful shouts. The spectacle was too detestable to be long endured of heaven. Suddenly the sun, shocked at the scene, veiled his face, and for three long hours the ribald crew sat shivering in midday midnight.

Meanwhile the earth trembled beneath their feet, the rocks were split, and the temple, in superstitious defense of whose perpetuity they had committed the murder of the just, had its holy veil rent as though by strong invisible hands. The news of this, and the feeling of horror produced by the darkness, and the earth tremor caused a revulsion of feelings. There were no more gibes and jests. No more thrusting out of the tongue and cruel mockeries, but they went their way solitary and alone to their homes, or in little silent groups, while each man after the manner of Orientals when struck with sudden awe, smote upon his breast.

Far different was the procession to the gates of Jerusalem from that march of madness which had come out therefrom. Observe the power which God has over human minds! See how He can tame the wildest and make the most malicious and proud to cower down at His feet when He does but manifest Himself in the wonders of nature! How much more cowed and terrified will they be when He makes bare His arm, and comes forth in the judgments of His wrath to deal with them according to their deserts!

This sudden and memorable change in so vast a multitude is the apt representative of two other remarkable mental changes. How like it is to the gracious transformation which a sight of the cross has often worked most blessedly in the hearts of men! Many have come under the sound of the Gospel resolved to scoff, but they have returned to pray. The most idle and even the basest motives have brought men under the preaching, but when Jesus has been lifted up, they have been savingly drawn to Him, and as a consequence have smitten upon their breasts in repentance, and gone their way to serve the Savior whom they once blasphemed.

Oh, the power, the melting, conquering, transforming power of that dear cross of Christ! My brethren, we have but to abide by the preaching of it. We have but constantly to tell abroad the matchless story, and we may expect to see the most remarkable spiritual results. We need despair of no

man now that Jesus has died for sinners. With such a hammer as the doctrine of the cross, the most flinty heart will be broken. And with such a fire as the sweet love of Christ, the most mighty iceberg will be melted. We need never despair for the heathenish or superstitious races of men. If we can but find occasion to bring the doctrine of Christ crucified into contact with their natures, it will yet change them, and Christ will be their King.

A second and most awful change is also foretold by the incident in our text, namely, the effect which a sight of Christ enthroned will have upon the proud and obstinate, who in this life rebelled against Him. Here they fearlessly jested concerning Him, and insultingly demanded, "Who is the Lord, that we should obey Him?" Here they boldly united in a conspiracy to break His bands asunder, and cast His cords from them, but when they wake up at the blast of the trump, and see the great white throne, which, like a mirror, shall reflect their conduct upon them, what a change will be in their minds!

Where now your quibbs and your jests? Where now your malicious speeches and your persecuting words? What! Is there not one among you who can play the man, and insult the Man of Nazareth to His face? No, not one! Like cowardly dogs, they slink away! The infidel's bragging tongue is silent! The proud spirit of the atheist is broken—his blustering and his carping are hushed forever! With shrieks of dismay and clamorous cries of terror, they entreat the hills to cover them, and the mountains to conceal them from the face of that very Man whose cross was once the subject of their scorn. O take heed, you sinners, take heed, I pray you, and be you changed this day by grace, lest you be changed by-and-by by terror, for the heart which will not be bent by the love of Christ shall be broken by the terror of His name.

If Jesus upon the cross do not save you, Christ on the throne shall damn you. If Christ dying be not your life, Christ living shall be your death. If Christ on earth be not your heaven, Christ coming from heaven shall be your hell. O may God's grace work a blessed turning of grace in each of us, that we may not be turned into hell in the dread day of reckoning.

We shall now draw nearer to the text, and in the first place, *analyze the general mourning around the cross*. Secondly, we shall if God shall help us, *endeavor to join in the sorrowful chorus*. And then, ere we conclude, we shall *remind you that at the foot of the cross our sorrow must be mingled with joy*.

I. First, then, let us ANALYZE THE GENERAL MOURNING which this text describes.

"All the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned." They all smote their breasts, but not all from the same cause. They were all afraid, not all from the same reason. The outward manifestations were alike in the whole mass, but the grades of difference in feeling were as many as the minds in which they ruled.

There were many, no doubt, who were merely moved with a transient emotion. They had seen the death agonies of a remarkable man, and the attendant wonders had persuaded them that He was something more than an ordinary being, and therefore, they were afraid. With a kind of indefinite fear, grounded upon no very intelligent reasoning, they were alarmed because God was angry and had closed the eye of day upon them, and made the rocks to rend. And burdened with this indistinct fear, they went their way trembling and humbled to their homes, but perhaps ere the next morning light had dawned, they had forgotten it all, and the next day found them greedy for another bloody spectacle, and ready to nail another Christ to the cross, if there had been such another to be found in the land.

Their beating of the breast was not a breaking of the heart. It was an April shower, a dewdrop of the morning, a hoar-frost that dissolved when the sun had risen. Like a shadow the emotion crossed their minds, and like a shadow it left no trace behind. How often, in the preaching of the cross, has this been the only result in tens of thousands! In this house, where so many souls have been converted, many more have shed tears which have been wiped away, and the reason of their tears has been forgotten. A handkerchief has dried up their emotions.

Alas! Alas! Alas! that while it may be difficult to move men with the story of the cross to weeping, it is even more difficult to make those emotions permanent. "I have seen something wonderful, this morning," said one who had listened to a faithful and earnest preacher, "I have seen a whole

congregation in tears." "Alas!" said the preacher, "there is something more wonderful still, for the most of them will go their way to forget that they ever shed a tear."

Ah, my hearers, shall it be always so—always so? Then, O you impenitent, there shall come to your eyes a tear which shall drip forever—a scalding drop which no mercy shall ever wipe away—a thirst that shall never be abated. There shall come to you a worm that shall never die, and a fire that never shall be quenched. By the love you bear your souls, I pray you escape from the wrath to come!

Others amongst that great crowd exhibited emotion based upon more thoughtful reflection. They saw that they had shared in the murder of an innocent person. "Alas!" said they, "we see through it all now. That man was no offender. In all that we have ever heard or seen of Him, He did good and only good. He always healed the sick, fed the hungry, and raised the dead. There is not a word of all His teaching that is really contrary to the law of God. He was a pure and holy man. We have all been duped. Those priests have egged us on to put to death one whom it were a thousand mercies if we could restore to life again at once. Our race has killed its benefactor."

"Yes," says one, "I thrust out my tongue. I found it almost impossible to restrain myself when everybody else was laughing and mocking at His tortures, but I am afraid I have mocked at the innocent, and I tremble lest the darkness which God has sent was His reprobation of my wickedness in oppressing the innocent." Such feelings would abide, but I can suppose that they might not bring men to sincere repentance, for while they might feel sorry that they had oppressed the Innocent, yet perceiving nothing more in Jesus than mere mal-treated virtue, and suffering manhood, the natural emotion might soon pass away, and the moral and spiritual result be of no great value.

How frequently have we seen in our hearers that same description of emotion! They have regretted that Christ should be put to death, they have felt like that old king of France who said, "I wish I had been there with ten thousand of my soldiers—I would have cut their throats sooner than they should have touched Him." But those very feelings have been evidence that they did not feel their share in the guilt as they ought to have done, and that to them the cross of Jesus was no more a saving spectacle than the death of a common martyr. Dear hearers, beware of making the cross to be a commonplace thing with you. Look beyond the sufferings of the innocent manhood of Jesus, and see upon the cross the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or else you look to the cross in vain.

No doubt there were a few in the crowd who smote upon their breasts because they felt, "We have put to death a prophet of God. As of old our nation slew Isaiah, and put to death others of the Master's servants, so today they have nailed to the cross one of the last of the prophets, and His blood will be upon us, and upon our children." Perhaps some of them said, "This man claimed to be Messiah, and the miracles which attended His death prove that He was so. His life betokens it, and His death declares it. What will become of our nation if we have slain the Prince of Peace! How will God visit us if we have put His prophet to death!"

Such mourning was in advance of other forms. It showed a deeper thought, and a clearer knowledge, and it may have been an admirable preparation for the later hearing of the Gospel—but it would not of itself suffice as evidence of grace. I shall be glad if my hearers in this house today are persuaded by the character of Christ that He must have been a prophet sent of God, and that He was the Messiah promised of old. And I shall be gratified if they, therefore, lament the shameful cruelties which He received from our apostate race.

Such emotions of compunction and pity are most commendable, and under God's blessing they may prove to be the furrows of your heart in which the Gospel may take root. He who thus was cruelly put to death was God over all blessed forever, the world's Redeemer, and the Savior of such as put their trust in Him. May you accept Him today as your deliverer, and so be saved, for if not, the most virtuous regrets concerning His death, however much they may indicate your enlightenment, will not manifest your true conversion.

In the motley company who all went home striking their breasts, let us hope that there were some who said, "Certainly this was the Son of God," and mourned to think He should have suffered for their

transgressions, and been put to grief for their iniquities. Those who came to that point were saved. Blessed were the eyes that looked upon the slaughtered Lamb in such a way as that, and happy were the hearts that there and then were broken because He was bruised and put to grief for their sakes.

Beloved, aspire to this. May God's grace bring you to see in Jesus Christ no other than God made flesh, hanging upon the cross in agony, to die, the just for the unjust, that we may be saved. O come and repose your trust in Him, and then smite upon your breasts at the thought that such a victim should have been necessary for your redemption. Then may you cease to smite your breasts, and begin to clap your hands for very joy—for they who thus bewail a Savior may rejoice in Him, for He is theirs and they are His.

II. We shall now ask you To JOIN IN THE LAMENTATION, each man according to his sincerity of heart, beholding the cross, and smiting upon his breast.

We will by faith put ourselves at the foot of the little knoll of Calvary. There we see in the center, between two thieves, the Son of God made flesh, nailed by His hands and feet, and dying in an anguish which words cannot portray. Look well, I pray you. Look steadfastly and devoutly, gazing through your tears. 'Tis He who was worshipped of angels, who is now dying for the sons of men. Sit down and watch the death of death's destroyer.

I shall ask you first to smite your breasts, as you remember that *you see in Him your own sins*. How great He is! That thorn-crowned head was once crowned with all the royalties of heaven and earth. He who dies there is no common man. King of kings, and Lord of lords is He who hangs on yonder cross. Then see the greatness of your sins which required so vast a sacrifice. They must be infinite sins to require an infinite person to lay down His life in order to their removal. You can never compass or comprehend the greatness of your Lord in His essential character and dignity, neither shall you ever be able to understand the blackness and heinousness of the sin which demanded His life as an atonement.

Brethren, smite your breast and say, "God be merciful to me, the greatest of sinners, for I am such." Look well into the face of Jesus, and see how vile they have made Him! They have stained those cheeks with spittle, they have lashed those shoulders with a felon's scourge. They have put Him to the death which was only awarded to the meanest Roman slave. They have hung Him up between heaven and earth, as though He were fit for neither. They have stripped Him naked, and left not a rag to cover Him!

See here, then, O believer, the shame of your sins. What a shameful thing your sins must have been. What a disgraceful and abominable thing, if Christ must be made such a shame for you! O be ashamed of yourself, to think your Lord should thus be scorned, and made nothing of for you! See how they aggravate His sorrows! It was not enough to crucify Him—they must insult Him. Nor that enough, they must mock His prayers, and turn His dying cries into themes for jest, while they offer Him vinegar to drink.

See, beloved, how aggravated were your sins and mine! Come, my brother, let us both smite upon our breasts and say, "Oh, how our sins have piled up their guiltiness! It was not merely that we broke the law, but we sinned against light and knowledge, against rebukes and warnings. As His griefs are aggravated, even so are our sins!" Look still into His dear face, and see the lines of anguish which indicate the deeper inward sorrow which far transcends mere bodily pain and smart. God, His Father, has forsaken Him. God has made Him a curse for us.

Then what must the curse of God have been against us? What must our sins have deserved? If when sin was only imputed to Christ, and laid upon Him for a while, His father turned His head away and made His Son cry out, "Lama Sabacthani!" Oh, what an accursed thing our sin must be, and what a curse would have come upon us. What thunderbolts, what coals of fire, what indignation and wrath from the Most High must have been our portion had not Jesus interposed. If JEHOVAH did not spare His Son, how little would He have spared guilty, worthless men if He had dealt with us after our sins, and rewarded us according to our iniquities!

As we still sit down, and look at Jesus, we remember that His death was voluntary—He need not have died unless He had so willed. Here then is another striking feature of our sin, for our sin was

voluntary too. We did not sin as of compulsion, but we deliberately chose the evil way. O sinner, let both of us sit down together and tell the Lord that we have no justification, or extenuation, or excuse to offer—we have sinned willfully against light and knowledge, against love and mercy. Let us strike upon our breasts, as we see Jesus willingly suffer, and confess that we have willingly offended against the just and righteous laws of a most good and gracious God.

I could fain keep you looking into those five wounds, and studying that marred face, and counting every purple drop that flowed from His hands, and feet, and side, but time would fail us. Only that one wound—let it abide with you—strike your breast because you see in Christ your sin.

Looking again—changing as it were our standpoint, but still keeping our eye upon that same dear crucified One, let us see there *the neglected and despised remedy for our sin*. If sin itself, in its first condition as rebellion, brings no tears to our eyes, it certainly ought in its second manifestation as ingratitude. The sin of rebellion is vile, but the sin of slighting the Savior is viler still. He that hangs on the tree, in groans and griefs unutterable, is He whom some of you have never thought of, whom you do not love, to whom you never pray, in whom you place no confidence, and whom you never serve. I will not accuse you. I will ask those dear wounds to do it, sweetly and tenderly. I will rather accuse myself, for alas! alas! there was a time when I heard of Him as with a deaf ear. There was a time when I was told of Him, and understood the love He bore to sinners, and yet my heart was like a stone within me, and would not be moved. I stopped my ear, and would not be charmed, even with such a master-fascination as the unselfish love of Jesus.

I think if I had been spared to live the life of an ungodly man for thirty, forty, or fifty years, and had been converted at last, I would never have been able to blame myself sufficiently for rejecting Jesus during all those years. Why even those of us who were converted in our youth, and almost in our childhood, cannot help blaming ourselves to think that so dear a friend, who had done so much for us, was so long slighted by us. Who could have done more for us than He, since He gave Himself for our sins?

Ah, how did we wrong Him while we withheld our hearts from Him! O sinners, how can you keep the doors of your hearts shut against the Friend of sinners? How can we close the door against Him who cries, “My head is wet with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night: open to me, my beloved, open to me”? I am persuaded there are some here who are His elect—you were chosen by Him from before the foundation of the world, and you shall be with Him in heaven one day to sing His praises, and yet at this moment, though you hear His name, you do not love Him, and though you are told of what He did, you do not trust Him.

What! Shall that iron bar always fast close the gate of your heart? Shall that door be always bolted? O Spirit of the living God, win an entrance for the blessed Christ this morning! If anything can do it, surely it must be a sight of the crucified Christ—that matchless spectacle shall make a heart of stone relent and melt, by Jesus’ love subdued. O may the Holy Ghost work this gracious melting, and He shall have all the honor.

Still keeping you at the foot of the cross, dear friends, every believer here may well smite upon his breast this morning as he thinks of *who it was that smarted so upon the cross*. Who was it? It was He who loved us before the world was made. It was He who is this day the Bridegroom of our souls, our Best-beloved. He who has taken us into the banqueting house, and waved His banner of love over us. He who has made us one with Himself, and has vowed to present us to His Father without spot. It is He, our Husband, our Ishi, who has called us His Hephzibah because His soul delights in us. It is He who suffered thus for us.

Suffering does not always excite the same degree of pity. You must know something of the individual before the innermost depths of the soul are stirred. And so it happens to us that the higher the character, and the more able we are to appreciate it, the closer the relation, and the more fondly we reciprocate the love, the more deeply does suffering strike the soul. You are coming to His table some of

you today, and you will partake of bread—I pray you remember that it represents the quivering flesh that was filled with pain on Calvary.

You will sip of that cup—then be sure to remember that it betokens to you the blood of One who loves you better than you could be loved by mother, or by husband, or by wife, or by friend. O sit down and smite your breasts that *He* should grieve. That heaven's Sun should be eclipsed. That heaven's Lily should be spotted with blood, and heaven's Rose should be whitened with a deadly pallor. Lament that perfection should be accused, innocence struck, and love murdered, and that Christ, the happy and the holy, the ever blessed, who had been for ages the Delight of angels, should now become the sorrowful, the acquaintance of grief, the bleeding and the dying. Smite upon your breasts, believers, and go your way!

Beloved in the Lord, if such grief as this should be kindled in you, it will be well to pursue the subject, and to reflect upon how unbelieving and how cruel we have been to Jesus since the day that we have known Him. What, does He bleed for me, and have I doubted Him? Is He the Son of God, and have I suspected His fidelity? Have I stood at the cross foot unmoved? Have I spoken of my dying Lord in a cold, indifferent spirit? Have I ever preached Christ crucified with a dry eye and a heart unmoved?

Do I bow my knee in private prayer, and are my thoughts wandering when they ought to be bound hand and foot to His dear bleeding self? Am I accustomed to turn over the pages of the Evangelists which record my Master's wondrous sacrifice, and have I never stained those pages with my tears? Have I never paused spellbound over the sacred sentence which recorded this miracle of miracles, this marvel of marvels? Oh, shame upon you, hard heart! Well may I smite you. May God smite you with the hammer of His Spirit, and break you to shivers. O you stony heart, you granite soul, you flinty spirit—well may I strike the breast which harbors you, to think that I should be so doltish in the presence of love so amazing, so divine.

Beloved, you may smite upon your breasts as you look at the cross, and mourn that you should have done so little for your Lord. I think if anybody could have sketched my future life in the day of my conversion, and have said, "You will be dull and cold in spiritual things! and you will exhibit but little earnestness, and little gratitude!" I should have said, like Hazael, "Is your servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?"

I suppose I read your hearts when I say that the most of you are disappointed with your own conduct as compared with your too-flattering prophecies of yourselves! What! Am I really pardoned? Am I in very deed washed in that warm stream which gushed from the riven side of Jesus, and yet am I not wholly consecrated to Christ? What! In my body do I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus, and can I live almost without a thought of Him? Am I plucked like a brand from the burning, and have I small care to win others from the wrath to come? Has Jesus stooped to win me, and do I not labor to win others for Him? Was He all in earnest about me, and am I only half in earnest about Him? Dare I waste a minute, dare I trifle away an hour? Have I an evening to spend in vain gossip and idle frivolities?

O my Heart, well may I smite you, that at the sight of the death of the dear lover of my soul, I should not be fired by the highest zeal, and impelled by the most ardent love to a perfect consecration of every power of my nature, every affection of my spirit, every faculty of my whole man. This mournful strain might be pursued to far greater lengths. We might follow up our confessions, still smiting, still accusing, still regretting, still bewailing. We might continue upon the bass notes evermore, and yet might we not express sufficient contrition for the shameful manner in which we have treated our blessed Friend. We might say with one of our hymn writers—

*"Lord, let me weep for nought but sin,
And after none but Thee.
And then I would—O that I might—
A constant weeper be!"*

One might desire to become a Niobe, and realize the desire of Jeremy, "O that my head were waters." Even the holy extravagance of George Herbert does not surprise us, for we would even sing with him the song of GRIEF—

*"Oh, who will give me tears? Come, all you springs,
Dwell in my head and eyes; come, clouds and rain!
My grief has need of all the watery things
That nature has produc'd. Let ev'ry vein
Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,
My weary weeping eyes; too dry for me,
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies,
To bear them out, and with my state agree.
What are two shallow fords, two little spouts
Of a lesser world? The greater is but small.
A narrow cupboard for my griefs and doubts,
Which want provision in the midst of all.
Verses, you are too fine a thing, too wise,
For my rough sorrows. Cease! Be dumb and mute.
Give up your feet and running to my eyes,
And keep your measures for some lover's lute,
Whose grief allows him music and a rhyme,
For mine excludes both measure, tune, and time,
—Alas, my God!"*

III. Having, perhaps, said enough on this point—enough if God blesses it, too much if without His blessing, let me invite you, in the third place, to remember that AT CALVARY, DOLOROUS NOTES ARE NOT THE ONLY SUITABLE MUSIC.

We admired our poet when, in the hymn which we have just sung, he appears to question with himself which would be the most fitting tune for Golgotha.

*"It is finished; ' shall we raise
Songs of sorrow or of praise?
Mourn to see the Savior die,
Or proclaim His victory?

If of Calvary we tell,
How can songs of triumph swell?
If of man redeemed from woe,
How shall notes of mourning flow?"*

He shows that since our sin pierced the side of Jesus, there is cause for unlimited lamentation, but since the blood which flowed from the wound has cleansed our sin, there is ground for unbounded thanksgiving. And therefore the poet, after having balanced the matter in a few verses, concludes with—

*"It is finished, ' let us raise
Songs of thankfulness and praise."*

After all, you and I are not in the same condition as the multitude who had surrounded Calvary. For at that time our Lord was still dead, but now He is risen indeed. There were yet three days from that Thursday evening (for there is much reason to believe that our Lord was not crucified on Friday), in which Jesus must dwell in the regions of the dead. Our Lord, therefore, so far as human eyes could see Him, was a proper object of pity and mourning, and not of thanksgiving.

But now, beloved, He ever lives and gloriously reigns. No charnel house confines that blessed body. He saw no corruption, for the moment when the third day dawned, He could no longer be held with the bonds of death, but He manifested Himself alive unto His disciples. He tarried in this world for forty days. Some of His time was spent with those who knew Him in the flesh. Perhaps a larger part of it was passed with those saints who came out of their graves after His resurrection, but certain it is that He is gone up, as the first-fruit from the dead. He is gone up to the right hand of God, even the Father. Do not bewail those wounds. They are lustrous with supernal splendor. Do not lament His death. He lives no more to die. Do not mourn that shame and spitting—

***The head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now.”***

Look up and thank God that death has no more dominion over Him. He ever lives to make intercession for us, and He shall shortly come with angelic bands surrounding Him to judge the quick and the dead. The argument for joy overshadows the reason for sorrow. Like as a woman when the man-child is born remembers no more her anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world, so, in the thought of the risen Savior, who has taken possession of His crown, we will forget the lamentation of the cross, and the sorrows of the broken heart of Calvary.

Moreover, hear the shrill voice of the high sounding cymbals, and let your hearts rejoice within you, for in His death our Redeemer conquered all the hosts of hell. They came against Him furiously, yea, they came against Him to eat up His flesh, but they stumbled and fell. They compassed Him about, yea, they compassed Him about like bees, but in the name of the Lord did the Champion destroy them. Against the whole multitude of sins, and all the battalions of the pit, the Savior stood, a solitary soldier fighting against innumerable bands, but He has slain them all. “Bruised is the dragon’s head.” Jesus has led captivity captive. He conquered when He fell. And let the notes of victory drown forever the cries of sorrow.

Moreover, brethren, let it be remembered that men have been saved. Let there stream before your gladdened eyes this morning the innumerable company of the elect. Robed in white they come in long procession. They come from distant lands, from every clime. Once scarlet with sin, and black with iniquity, they are all white and pure, and without spot before the throne forever. Beyond temptation, beatified and made like Jesus. And how? It was all through Calvary. There was their sin put away. There was their everlasting righteousness brought in and consummated. Let the hosts that are before the throne, as they wave their palms, and touch their golden harps, excite you to a joy like their own, and let that celestial music hush the gentler voices which mournfully exclaim—

***“Alas! and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?”***

Nor is that all. You yourself are saved. O brother, this will always be one of your greatest joys. That others are converted through your instrumentality is occasion for much thanksgiving, but your Savior’s advice to you is, “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” You, a spirit meet to be cast away. You whose portion must have been with devils. You are this day forgiven, adopted, saved, on the road to heaven. Oh! while you think that you are saved from hell, that you are lifted up to glory, you cannot but rejoice that your sin is put away from you through the death of Jesus Christ, your Lord.

Lastly, there is one thing for which we ought always to remember Christ’s death with joy, and that is that although the crucifixion of Jesus was intended to be a blow at the honor and glory of our God—though in the death of Christ the world did, as far as it was able, put God Himself to death, and so earn

for itself that hideous title, “a deicidal world,” yet never did God have such honor and glory as He obtained through the sufferings of Jesus. Oh, they thought to scorn Him, but they lifted His name on high!

They thought that God was dishonored when He was most glorified. The image of the Invisible, had they not marred it? The express image of the Father’s person, had they not defiled it? Ah, so they said! But He that sits in the heavens may well laugh and have them in derision, for what did they? They did but break the alabaster box, and all the blessed drops of infinite mercy streamed forth to perfume all worlds. They did but rend the veil, and then the glory which had been hidden between the cherubim shone forth upon all lands.

O nature, adoring God with your ancient and priestly mountains, extolling Him with your trees, which clap their hands, and worshipping with your seas, which in their fullness roar out JEHOVAH’s praise, with all your tempests and flames of fire, your dragons and your deeps, your snow and your hail, you cannot glorify God as Jesus glorified Him when He became obedient unto death. O heaven, with all your jubilant angels, your ever-chanting cherubim and seraphim, your thrice holy hymns, your streets of gold, and endless harmonies, you cannot reveal the deity as Jesus Christ revealed it on the cross.

O hell, with all your infinite horrors and flames unquenchable, and pains and griefs and shrieks of tortured ghosts, even you cannot reveal the justice of God as Christ revealed it in His riven heart upon the bloody tree. O earth and heaven and hell! O time and eternity, things present and things to come, visible and invisible, you are dim mirrors of the Godhead compared with the bleeding Lamb. O heart of God, I see you nowhere as at Golgotha, where the Word incarnate reveals the justice and the love, the holiness and the tenderness of God in one blaze of glory. If any created mind would fain see the glory of God, he need not gaze upon the starry skies, nor soar into the heaven of heavens, he has but to bow at the cross foot, and watch the crimson streams which gush from Immanuel’s wounds.

If you would behold the glory of God, you need not gaze between the gates of pearls, you have but to look beyond the gates of Jerusalem and see the Prince of Peace expire. If you would receive the noblest conception that ever filled the human mind of the lovingkindness, and the greatness, and the pity, and yet the justice and the severity and the wrath of God, you need not lift up your eyes, nor cast them down, nor look to paradise, nor gaze on Tophet—you have but to look into the heart of Christ all crushed and broken and bruised, and you have seen it all.

Oh, the joy that springs from the fact that God has triumphed after all! Death is not the victor. Evil is not master. There are not two rival kingdoms, one governed by the God of good, and the other by the God of evil. No, evil is bound, chained, and led captive. Its sinews are cut, its head is broken. Its king is bound to the dread chariot of JEHOVAH-Jesus, and as the white horses of triumph drag the Conqueror up the everlasting hills in splendor of glory, the monsters of the pit cringe at His chariot wheels.

Wherefore, beloved, we close this discourse with this sentence of humble yet joyful worship, “Glory be unto the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—LUKE 23:27-56.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.